1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Ah, but they knew each other.

Bayo began paddling faster to keep up with him.

"There is to be a council meeting at Gankwe. I had to hurry away last night, and I must get back there in time. We must have permission from the spirit of the dead man to go back to work, and Sedefo has to find out if he can start up the river, and if he does go, we must all pray to the ancestors because four men will be going from Gankwe, and the *Gran Sembe*—the village elders—have things to decide . . . "

Now, fearing that he might have said too much, he doubled his speed, and Bayo understood that the other preferred to be alone. They belonged to different clans, Bayo to the same as the headman of the tribe, and the Gankwe people to another. Gankwe was sending important men to take the Bakra up the river. The chief's own brother, Asikanu, was to go, although it was said he was being sent out of the way while his adultery case was being settled. There had been talk about this case up and down the river. The Gankwe clan head had given a chief's sanctuary to the offender because he was his own brother, people said. Well, if the injured husband committed suicide as he threatened, and sent a kunu to the family of the brother, and even the village and clan, it would be an ugly thing. But so it was with trouble about women. It was as they said,

"*Sleep is death*
Woman kills man."

He half chanted the proverb and smiled, for he looked forward to his trip up the river with an eye to a visit in Lamé, where the women knew how to love. And he began singing the seketi song which he liked so well. Both the melody and the words were old, but he sang the refrain as if it were quite his own—whatever hardships there were on the river, at Lamé one slept with the women!

At the village of Akunkun an old man and a boy of about nine were at the landing place ready to start. Bayo

1t Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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him. He has taken boats up and down the Marowyne. He is my grandson. If I had one of my own blood, I would have had him accompany you. . . . But my sisters' children sleep," he ended, using the euphemism for death.

When we came to know the young man, we asked him about this incident with the Granman. Was he not afraid to interrupt him?

"Ma kye! But he is my grandfather! With my grandfather I make sport."

Again we went to the old men and sought in village after village for their own explanation of this behavior toward grandparents.

There were, we learned, age distinctions that were deeply felt. A man was on easy terms with those of his own generation. Between parents and children, and those of the generation of their parents, however, there was a definite code of behavior. For example, no young man or woman might talk of sexual matters with either parent, and this lack of sanction for frankness in sexual discussions with parents became an actual taboo with parents-in-law. Encounters with the "pai" and "mai," as they were known, were hemmed in by countless prohibitions. A man might not sleep in the same house with either of them, nor might he eat with them out of the same dish. If he met either of his parents-in-law as he went along the path, he had to turn aside, make way for them, and cover his face. He might not pronounce their names, nor might they speak his. These observances held for women, too, and the ones we mention were by no means all.

With grandparents, however, a vastly different situation obtained.

"He is my grandson. I call him mati—friend. I make sport with him!"

"She is my granddaughter. She calls me husband. She makes free with me!"

"She is my granddaughter, we talk about everything. She calls me kambo, and I call her kambo." Again, we

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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194 the Granman punctuated the pauses of the men, though not often their meaning.

623 But whatever the reports of the women, and the commands given by the Granman, the word for white man interspersed all of the morning's recitals, and the questions of the Granman and the answers often came fast.

Of the men, the Granman asked little. They came up in pairs usually, and now one, now the other took up the report. Clan names were spoken, and occasionally a village name was mentioned, but on the morning preceding the council of the chiefs, only one village was discussed, and one clan. The name of the village was the forbidden one where we had stopped for the night against the Granman's orders, and the clan was that of one group of our paddlers.

2

574 Early on the morning after our arrival at Asindopo Lantiwe, our paddlers came to see us in the council house. The Granman was busy outside his own house with the chiefs who had gathered for the council meeting, and these men who, like ourselves, were strangers here, came as comrades of an adventurous journey to visit with us and talk over the impressiveness of our reception and the allure of the women of the Granman's village, who were famous everywhere on the river. It was a village where chastity [831] among the girls was closely watched, and where its women [582] were given in marriage to the most influential men on the river.

302 291 The men were gotten up splendidly. Their bodies glistened with oil, their cloths were made of the long strips, pieced together by their women, and of patterns which the sun's rays had had no chance to pale. Sedefo's was particularly fine, we thought, but he assured us that it did not compare with the one the river had claimed. His cloth was also made of strips, but the stitching which connected them was a lacy weave, worked in triangles, and made to resemble the vertebrae of a snake. The border was of triangular

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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4

The cult of fertility came to the Suriname bush from Africa. Deepseated today in this civilization, it is not strange that it should be invoked again and again in the carvings, that men and women in sexual congress, and animals in the act of reproduction should dominate the art motifs, and in particular those carvings which men make for their women.

The symbolism is known to all on the river though, as we have indicated, a gifted artist might play with his medium, and even give his own name to what he had designed. Evidences of nontraditional playing with technique were, to be sure, not met with often, but one or two instances stand out. One that was especially striking was a hinged folding stool, fashioned after a bench seen in the city, and decorated in traditional fashion, where the problem of decorating unfamiliar surfaces was met.

Bayo could take up many of our photographs of pieces, acquired during our first visit and brought here into the bush to show the natives how their pieces were exhibited, and describe the symbols to us which made up the carvings. There was one which interested him especially. He used to sit with the photograph in his hand, running his fingers over the glossy surface, as though he felt if he continued doing it long he would actually feel the texture of the wood which was so clearly imaged.

"Everything shows. Here's a crack, see?" Then his hands touched one motif after another. "This and this are women, and these are men. A man and woman to one side, and a man and woman facing them. It's like having the tray here, white man." The small designs close to the rim of the tray, facing each other, were the children to be born of these unions. "This is a boy, and this a girl. That is for both women to make twins."

We were looking over his shoulder as he explained the symbols, but still could not distinguish in the symbols to the side which represented the male child and which the female.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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"You have come to go, come to go far, come to go far to bring the wood to the water. But it is long, it is far, to the river. Thank you, friends."

Then the song was taken up by the workers and, with each rhythmic measure, the great piece of lumber went farther through the jungle on its way to the river. When he had chanted for us the greeting to the men, Bayo began to sing a song relating to men's casual exploits with women and, as he finished the song, he laughed. "White man, if you came with us, you would hear what songs the men make up about women!"

3

The phonograph had delighted Bayo from the first. When Apanto had summoned the spirit of his obia to fight the machine, Bayo had watched. When the white man's glue had repaired the broken belt, and the hot sun had made the machine "walk" once more, Bayo had approved.

"The machine is not weak," he had said. "I will sing for it."

And sing for it he did.

But the curse of Apanto still troubled the machine, for up the river and down there had been difficulty with it. Often when there was a particularly good song to be recorded, the belt would give, the machine would fail the white man. The story of the prowess of Apanto had gone up the river with the Gankwe paddlers, and when the machine stopped, heads nodded, and we would catch the word "obia" among the murmurs of the bystanders.

Bayo thought, it seemed, that the machine's proud spirit was by this time properly chastened and, since twice the machine had refused to work while he was singing into it, twice had made him stop the song and its drum accompaniment, he decided to take matters into his own hands.

"White man," said Bayo, shortly after our return from up the river, "I will help the spirit of the machine. I will

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1929-1929) 1934
Bush Negroes
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115 584 [249] Bayo knew the bush as he knew the river. At one point he stopped and, clipping off a long, slender branch with his bush knife, he trimmed it and began to strike at a palm tree. He was after maripa nuts, and soon they began to pelt the ground. Their pink, slightly astringent meat was highly prized by the Bush Negroes as a delicacy, and the white man also found them good. Both munched them as they walked farther into the bush. It was a good time to speak of Bayo's marriage.

"Your mother said you needed to work hard before marrying."

"Ai."

"Is it money you need?"

"Much money, and goods besides."

"What will your girl do with all this money, and all of these goods?"

"They are not all for her. She would have me without them. It is her mother who must get things, too."

That Bayo was attractive to women, we had often seen, but that his betrothed would have him without the wealth demanded for her by right of whatever position her family held, seemed doubtful. However, this was not the time to argue the point.

"Your girl is still young. Do girls her age know enough to choose a man?"

The question brought us to the story of how Bayo became betrothed.

His girl, he told us, was of good family. She had lived in his village, because her mother at marriage had come to live with her husband at Djamungo, but a few years after Bayo had become betrothed to the girl, his mother's sister took her away to the family seat up the river.

"Do you care for your girl, Bayo?"

"*M'an sabi, Bak'a*—I do not know. We shall see how we [831] get on. But her family is good, and they are looking after her chastity, as families who have position do."

"What if you don't get on after you are married?"

586 "We will separate. She will go back to her own family. Sometimes, if a man doesn't like a woman too much, and

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was called, and the couple were left alone, while outside the villagers danced and sang of fertility all night. 585

In the morning the man's brothers come to the house to find out if she had ever before been to the hammock with another man. 831 585 696

"What happens if they find that she has?"

Bayo's reply was prompt. "Usually nothing. The man doesn't give her as many presents as he would have given her. If he had promised her thirty pangi, he would only give her fourteen. If he liked her, he wouldn't turn her away."

"What would happen to her, though? Would they punish her?"

"They say," Bak'a, sometimes a man likes her better for it. It shows him other men had cared for her. But her family scolds her, and sometimes punishes her, too, and the women of the village talk plenty. They pull their lip at her the next morning, and later, whenever there is a quarrel, they talk about it again."

But if the girl were found to have been a virgin, then all the people danced, and there was a great feast, with dances to all the gods.

"You must come back for my wedding, Bak'a, you and your woman. Then you will see dancing!" 585

"But your girl is still a child, Bayo."

"Ah, no. She is getting her cuts on her thighs. She wears a cloth." He knew, because on his way down from the Granman he had stopped at her village and when the family was not about he had made sure. "If you come next year, we will both be ready." 881

The two men still followed the bush trail when Bayo had finished his account of how the marriage was conducted. Now and then Tross would appear, wag his tail, and be off into the underbrush again. 000

"Tell me, Bayo," the white man began, "do many girls go with a man to the hammock before they are married?" 836

He waited for a moment before he answered. Smiling, he ran his hand over his newly braided head with the innumerable little braids between the lines of white.

"About half of them, I guess," he said.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
— SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

531 In the combs, paddles, and other pieces of wood carv-
322 ing illustrated in this book, the most casual observer will discern a great beauty of form and design. The sense of line, the feeling for balance, combined with elaborate conception and execution, compare well with the productions of the highly sophisticated artists of our urban civilization. All of the wood carvings, collectively known as *sanni* or *timbeh*, follow certain traditional patterns. The individual motifs, however, are products of the individual imagination, and, judging by the variety and originality of the designs shown herewith, that imagination is evidently quite fertile.

[462] All the carving is done by men. There is a ceremonial significance to this. These wooden pieces are tokens of love.

Love in the jungle is not the etherealized sentiment portrayed by Victorian novelists. When a man and woman
● [831] want each other the satisfaction of their desire is easy and immediate. The people are largely promiscuous among themselves. Under such conditions the existence of romantic sentiments is an impossibility.

822 Individual preference does, of course, exist, and this im-
322 plies courtship. A man may want a woman who does not
431 want him, and this implies wooing. The wooing consists in presenting the woman with specimens of sanni. Thus, every piece of wood carving is a token of love and affection, presented by a Bush Negro to his woman. The woman who accepts sanni from a suitor accepts his love along with it. The man naturally stores up a quantity of sanni in expecta-

/519 cont./

128 163 Fertility. We have classed the women, according to the year of birth, into four categories, for fertility has varied considerably in the course of time. The study has been made by five-year age-blocks. The table below /see p. 16 / shows the cumulative fertility (total of figures obtained for the various age-blocks from 15 to 50 years of age). For the women of categories three and four, the number obtained is the result of an extrapolation.

842 Among the Boni there is no custom leading to a diminution of fertility, and the voluntary restriction of births is unknown.

163 164 [177] The vertical fall of fertility between categories one and two results from the invasion of venereal diseases, which seems to have coincided with the period (1920) when the search for the balata brought into the interior a heavy traffic of adventurers accompanied by numerous prostitutes. The very free morals [831] of the Boni favor the propagation of the illness, which, since that time, has not ceased its ravages, stemmed only, but not eliminated, by the medical effort of these last years.

/137 cont./

429
428 She bequeathed thus her guardianship over Fintiman (46 years) to the grand man
over Klémenti (43 years) to Samalobi, the grand man's brother
over ○ Kulina (38 years) to Samalobi
over ○ Eliana (40 years) to the grand man.

But she bequeathed nothing concerning her last two children, ○ Baïkom (35 years) and ○ Maria (28) respectively brought up by △ Malobi, Béniti's husband, and by ○ Aliki, an old woman of the Dju lineage. It will behoove these two persons to bequeath, at their death, the spiritual tutelage over the girls they have raised.

581

Marriage

It is for lack of a more appropriate word that we use the word "marriage" with respect to the Refugee Blacks; the word concubinage is unpleasant to use; nevertheless it fits better what the union of a man and woman represents in the thought of the Refugee Blacks as in their social life.

In the organization we have just described no stable and permanent tie between a man and woman is implied.

831 Actually the Refugee Blacks, with rare exceptions, appear to be incapable of associating a strong and lasting emotional tie with sexual union. They are unstable in this respect, always in search of new adventures and not settling on any one. Their unions are more inspired by material concern (getting the

/137 cont./

831 necessary food) than by a sentimental motive. It is very rare to meet among them the appearance of sincere and lasting love for a woman; that is sometimes seen, but it is the exception.

562 It is not enough to say that they have few emotional feelings with respect to women. In the conversations heard in the evening around the campfires a deep contempt is expressed on this subject; they even speak of the Boni women as of a foreign and almost enemy nation; they consider them besides as half irresponsible. This attitude shows through in the custom concern- [684] ing adultery, which decrees that the lover be beaten but not the wife.

581 Among the Refugee Blacks marriage is in fact a contract of maintenance between a man and woman, which provides for the execution of such-and-such work by the one for the benefit of the other, and for the wife the obligation to be faithful. [586] This contract can be cancelled unilaterally without any sort of indemnity. [965] It does not directly involve the relatives of the spouses; it involves them only in case of the death of one spouse, for the surviving spouse must /138/ put up with the subservience [613] of mourning. It is principally for this reason that a marriage must be officially known by both lineages, and that a divorce must be proclaimed without delay.

582 613 614 Exogamy. Marriage is forbidden between persons of the same lineage. In expressing this prohibition the Refugee Blacks employ the word bee (lineage in the restricted sense) and not the word lo.

613 As we have seen in studying the situation of the various lineages, the various Boni kin groups follow different rules in this regard:

--The Dju lineage, which forms only one single group from the genealogical point of view, does not allow marriage between its members;

/174 cont./

764 Children are buried with the normal ceremonies only from about the age of six on. The rule is the following: A child is buried in the cemetery and broko dɛ is done for him if the next child of the same mother is beginning to walk.

766 Young children are buried without a coffin at a special site on the edge of each village; a board is simply placed on the [828] body before filling the grave. They have the idea that very [705] young children have no vital force, and that their yɔrka cannot do any harm. /Fig. 25 appears here./ /175/

Mourning

764 After the burial the wives of the dead man (or the husband if it is a woman), the nearest relatives on the maternal side, as well as the children, sojourn eight days more in the mortuary shed, until the broko dɛ.

765 From then on the obligations of mourning are limited, [831] for the near relatives of the dead person, to abstaining for a [705] year from dancing, wearing jewelry or too fine clothes; it goes [171] completely otherwise for the spouse of the dead person; the Refugee Blacks indeed take for granted, like the Creoles of Surinam, the persistence of the sexual jealousy of the dead person, whose yɔrka is thought to remain in contact with the living for a year.

State of the spouse in mourning. The principle is that the surviving spouse, until the lifting of mourning, is subject to the will of the dead person. In order to materialize that in an obvious way, he cannot, during this whole period, wear his usual clothes but must dress exclusively in pieces of cloth appropriated for him from among the ones the dead person possessed, or given by the nearest maternal relatives of the dead person.

/259 cont./

Cult of Mama gɔɔ̃. Mama gɔɔ̃, mother of the earth, is represented by a crude statue of white clay provided with enormous breasts, symbol of fecundity, which can be seen in a little hut situated on the open place of Boniville village. Each year, when the time for cutting the clearings approaches, the grand man, surrounded by many other people, prays to the god to grant fertility to the plantings. If rain does not fall, an offering of water and tafia is made and the statue is sprinkled.

The Boni do not appear to associate the idea of women's fecundity with that of the fertility of the soil, and we have not heard anyone say that the grand man prays on this subject.

Neither do they appear to have a very clear idea about the relationships of this worship with that of the gɔɔ̃ gadu, local gods of the soil.

Every three years a great possession dance takes place in Boniville on January 1, /260/ in which the Papa gadu gods dance in front of the sanctuary of Mama gɔɔ̃. We have not been able to obtain specific information on the meaning of this rite.

Cult of the gɔɔ̃ gadu. It is assumed that every portion of land is under the sway of a local god, gɔɔ̃ gadu. Its power is limited only by the fertility of the soil, and he who neglects its worship cannot be attacked in his person or in his goods, but only punished by a poor harvest.

What is the nature of these gods, what is their place in the cosmogony? These are questions which not one of our informants had ever asked himself. In their minds, gɔɔ̃ gadu has a de facto existence, and is rendered de facto worship. This worship consists essentially of:

--Offerings made at the moment of planting;

--The observance of a local day of rest, kina dɛ, corresponding to the god's day of rest.

/268 cont./

538 --Deception, more particularly associated with gluttony; in many tales, complicated ruses have for their purpose eating the neighbor's share.

Half the tales are improvisations on extremely varied themes and are impossible to classify. A large proportion are fantastic stories, disconnected and incoherent, recalling the progress of dreams. We have given no room here to this type of tale which in fact presents little of sociological interest.

•[831] The Anansi Toli never have a licentious character.

In a general way, the tales of the Refugee Blacks do not reflect any definite concept. The same character is represented from one tale to another in contradictory aspects; he has no fixed personality. For example, the character Anansi, generally represented as lying, thieving, jealous, greedy, and cruel, is not associated with any definite concept. Some tales show him bringing Death among men, but others show him humiliating, to the great joy of men, the maleficent goddesses of the water and the bush. Most of the tales represent him as a swindler, but in some he figures as a judge. These contradictions are not perceived by the Refugee Blacks.

The storyteller himself succeeds with difficulty in following the thread of his story, losing himself in details, often recounted with wit. Sometimes the theme turns aside completely in the course of the narrative, like the ornamental motifs of the Refugee Blacks in which human limbs end in volutes, giving a harmonious whole but without great meaning. In this respect there is a great difference from one storyteller to the other. Certain ones construct more highly organized narratives; most are satisfied with the incoherent and fantastic tales.